

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

THE KINDERGARTEN
AS A PART OF SCHOOL LIFE



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EARLY EXPERIENCES IN HOME MAKING

FOREWORD

Increasing recognition of the importance of early child experiences gives special significance to the kindergarten. Here the child is surrounded with helpful influences. His experiences are organized and directed with definite aims in mind. The fundamentals of character growth are laid, and his physical and mental life protected and developed.

This bulletin seeks to help the public, in general, to understand more fully the values of the kindergarten and to provide school boards with standards for its establishment. The following committee has collaborated in its preparation:

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THE KINDERGARTEN AS A PART OF SCHOOL LIFE

PART I

THE VALUE OF THE KINDERGARTEN

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

Development of personality.—One baby smiles almost as soon as he is born. Another baby is irritable and querulous. Still another baby is notably bright while a second child may be slow to learn. So, too, the seeds of bodily vigor or weakness are present at birth. In short, each individual is a personality when he comes into the world. What this original personality becomes, how much of its best qualities are preserved and developed and how much that is undesirable is eliminated or corrected, is closely related to the intelligence with which the child's activities are directed during his early years.

Organized direction of experience.—In the kindergarten the Commonwealth seeks to provide organized direction of the experiences of the young child, as part of the public school system; to counteract weaknesses in the home and environment; to strengthen the efforts of the good home and to capitalize community assets; to discover individual differences and to provide for varying capacities and interests. Practical illustrations of the value of the kindergarten are found in the opportunity that it provides for early care of the health of the child; in its contribution to successful first grade work; in its emphasis upon character training.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY HEALTH CARE

Need for physical attention.—The years from four to six are especially vital in the health of the child. Numerous diseases are common at this period. In addition, many children reach this age with unhealed-for physical weaknesses, some of which have been present from birth. The kindergarten seeks to provide conditions that are favorable to health; to prevent the development of disease, and to seek the removal of remediable handicaps that may exist. Provision is made for plenty of sunshine, fresh air, and healthful play. Vaccination is required as a pre-requisite to school attendance. Parents are urged to have their children immunized against diphtheria and to make use of other scientifically proved methods for the prevention and amelioration of disease. The removal of long standing weaknesses is sought. The need for care of the teeth is emphasized. Homes are visited and mothers advised. In short, the kindergarten seeks to make

the child as physically competent as he can be made in the situations that exist.

Special assistance from the State.—A program such as the above, implies early health examination by a competent physician and intelligent follow-up where remedial and preventive health measures are needed. Because of the importance of early attention to the health of the child, the State Department of Health and the State Department of Public Instruction are cooperating in giving special health service to the child in the kindergarten. The outcomes of the procedure as planned and the developments hoped for are certain to be far reaching.

RELATION OF THE KINDERGARTEN TO FIRST GRADE WORK

The tragedy of failure.—The Bureau of Child Helping and Accounting, Department of Public Instruction, reports, that in 1927-1928 there were in one-half of the school districts in Pennsylvania, more than 24 boys and girls out of every one hundred in the first grade who were repeating work previously attempted. In 32 of the 66 counties having county superintendents, and in 19 of the 159 districts having district superintendents, this runs above 33 out of every one hundred, and in 7 counties and 3 districts to above 41 out of every one hundred, reaching a maximum of 47 out of every one hundred.

All will agree that something should be done to improve such a situation. The results of failure on the threshold of school life cannot be estimated. The disapproval of his parents and the attitudes of his more fortunate mates often bring untold suffering to the child who fails. Confidence in himself may be broken or destroyed. Antagonisms toward the school may be born that may follow him all his life. The bulk of the evidence in a number of investigations indicates that adequate kindergarten training tends to lower retardation in the first grade.*

Factors contributing to failure in first grade work.—The large majority of children who fail in the first grade eventually succeed in doing the work of this grade. With comparatively few exceptions, therefore, the question is not one of the child's ability to do first grade work but of his inability to do the work of this grade at the particular time that he makes his initial attempt. On the other hand the mentality of a number of children is so low or their physical con-

*For some such evidence see United States Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1926, No. 13, *The Kindergarten in Certain City School Surveys*, Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.; Kindergarten Circular No. 13, 1923, *Pre-First-grade Training*, Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.; *Kindergarten Training as Affecting Later Elementary School Progress and Achievement*, Childhood Education, May, 1927, page 402; *Kindergarten*, Pennsylvania School Journal, May, 1928, page 548.



READING READINESS MAKES FIRST GRADE READING EASIER

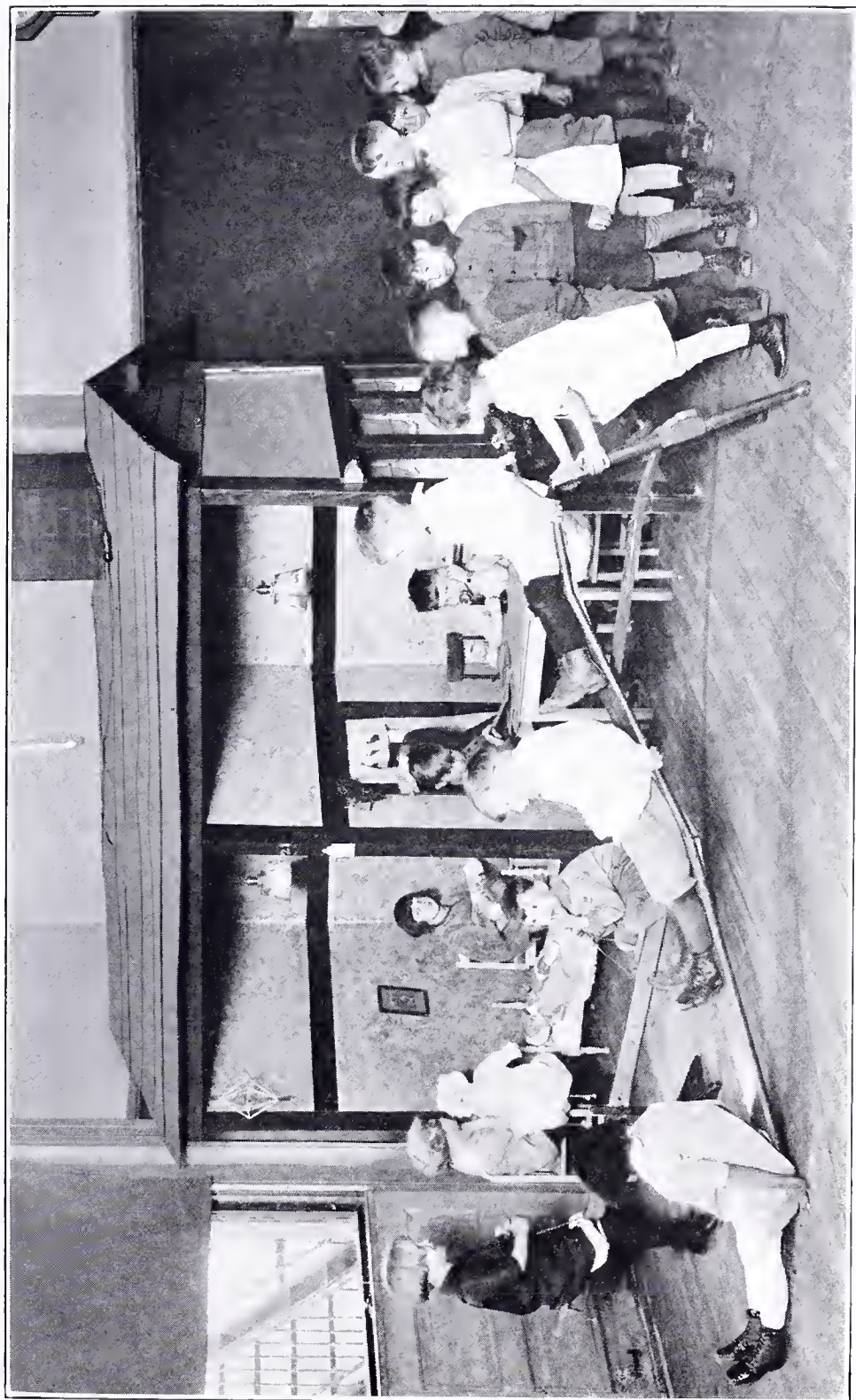
dition so far from normal that it is likely that they never will be able to do the work of the average curriculum successfully. Such children should not become repeaters in the first grade; they should be discovered in the kindergarten and provision made for their care. In short, most repeaters in the first grade fail as a result of conditions that make success for them unlikely. These conditions are largely accounted for under five heads:

1. Ill health in relation to attendance.
2. Difficulties in making necessary adjustments to group life.
3. Mental immaturity.
4. Lack of readiness for first grade subject matter.
5. Inadequate provision for children who belong in the field of special education.

Ill health in relation to attendance.—The relation of attendance to school achievement is obvious. For the most part absences in first grade are a result of physical handicaps and illnesses. Other things being equal, the first grade group that has had proper health service during the kindergarten period is certain to have fewer absences than the first grade that has had no such care. As pointed out, the State Department of Health and the State Department of Public Instruction are cooperating in a plan that provides special health supervision for the public school kindergartens in the State. This plan was first put into operation in October, 1929. What needs to be done in the kindergarten, in order to assure maximum health conditions for the child entering the first grade, is illustrated in the first county in which this plan was tried.

Each child in the four kindergartens in this county was given a complete physical examination in the presence of the mother by a woman physician in the State Department of Health. A total of three hundred and twenty physical defects, exclusive of dental defects, were found in the one hundred and seventy-four children examined. These defects included faulty tonsils, 28.1 percent; enlarged glands, 49.2 percent; cardiac defects, 15.5 percent; flat feet and prominent ankles, 31.3 percent.

Medical examination, however, is but a first step in successful health service. True success is measured in terms of accomplishment in the amelioration and removal of the defects found. In every case the results of medical examination are made a basis for thorough and persistent follow-up work under the direction of the State Department



EACH ONE IN HIS TURN

of Health and the Health and Physical Education Bureau of the Department of Public Instruction.

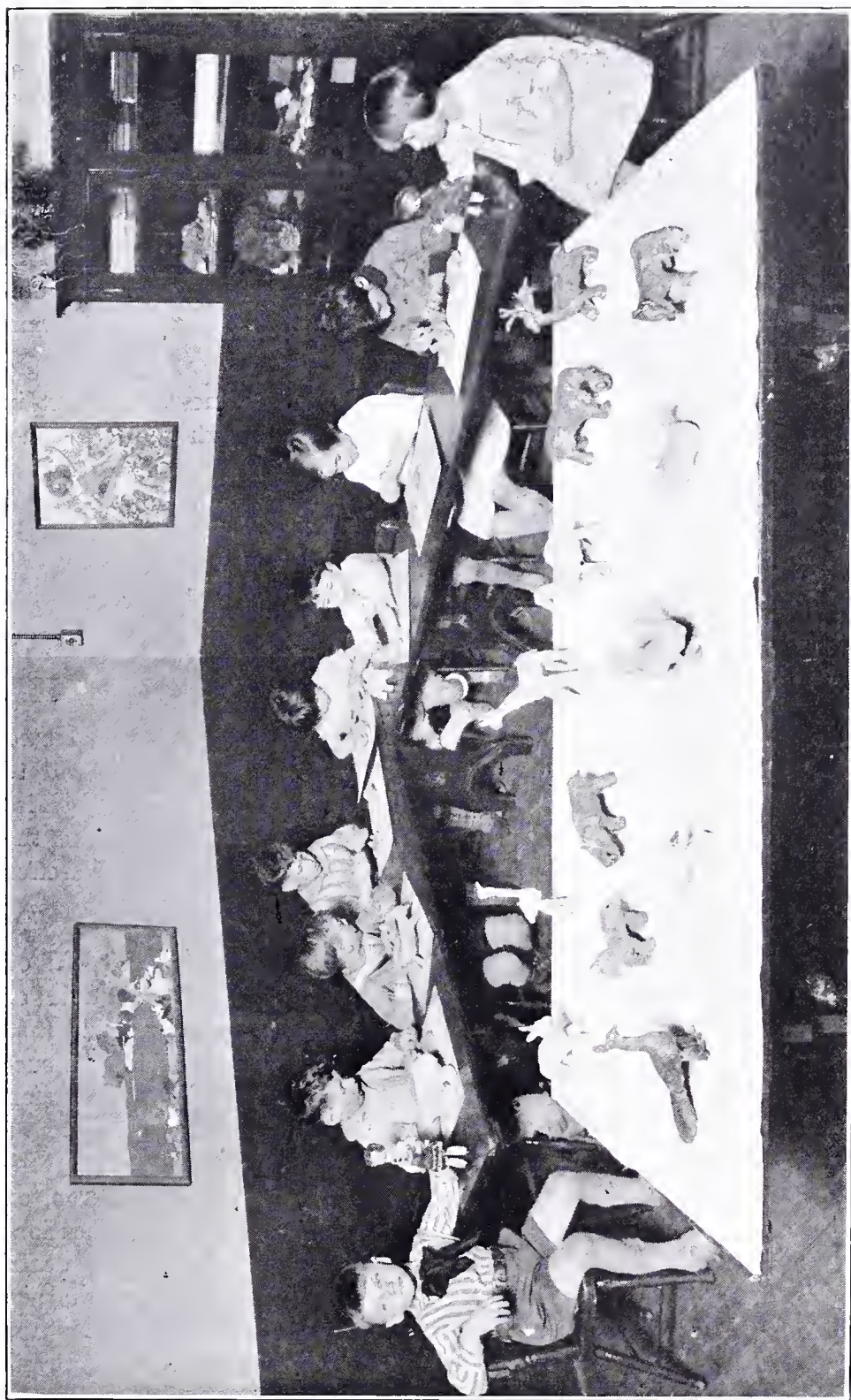
Difficulties in making necessary adjustments to group life.—

Many children fail in their initial attempt to do first grade work because they find it difficult to adjust themselves to the demands of group life. The kindergarten child learns the reasons for following directions; for quietness when the teacher speaks; for organization in the activities of the school. So, too, he learns to interpret this knowledge in terms of concrete behavior. Happy interrelations between the kindergarten and the first grade lay the foundations for successful adjustment to the requirements of first grade work. Each gives parties for the other. The first grade teacher and the kindergarten teacher occasionally exchange work. The kindergarten child continues his school work in the first grade instead of beginning it. Time is saved and still more important, the child's original attitudes toward the school are happy ones.

Mental immaturity.—The child of average ability attains a mental age of six years when he is six years old chronologically. In the case of the child who is slower than average, but who is capable of eventually carrying on regular school work, the development of a mental age of six years may be deferred until he is seven or eight years old. Intelligence tests show that a mental age of six years is essential to normal progress in learning to read. The child, therefore, who enters the first grade before he has attained a mental age of six years is not ready for the work of this grade.

Under the law a child may enter first grade before he is six years old chronologically.* It is obvious that only the child who is above average is ready for the first grade before he is six years old. Most children living within convenient distance of a kindergarten enter this department before they are of legal first grade age. Here their possibilities are analyzed. The child of average ability is retained until he is ready for first grade work. The superior child is given an opportunity to develop on a basis of his capacities. When a child who is slower than average reaches a chronological age of six years he is recommended for placement in a pre-primary group or in a special group otherwise organized, until such time as his attainments indicate that he has a reasonable chance for success in a slow moving group in the first grade. Satisfaction in school work is sought; fail-

*Beginners becoming six years of age after the beginning of the school term, and before the first day of January of any year, shall be admitted during the period at the beginning of the school term, and beginners becoming six years of age between the first day of January and the close of the term shall be admitted during the period following the first day of January. Article XIV, Section 1403, Pennsylvania School Law, 1929.



BEGINNINGS IN ART, GEOGRAPHY AND NATURE STUDY

ures are prevented; the personality of the child is protected in every possible way.

Lack of readiness for first grade subject matter.—Not infrequently a child who enters first grade directly from the home fails in his initial work, although he easily adjusts himself to classroom organization and his mental age makes normal progress probable. This is especially likely to be true where a foreign language is spoken in the home, or where the home background is lacking in normal stimulation. Such a child may be uninterested in learning to read or ignorant of the simplest number facts.

The kindergarten seeks to develop academic readiness. Interest in nature and society is initiated and amplified through songs, stories, pictures, and rhymes. Visits to industrial and commercial plants give first hand contacts with the workers in the community. Practical situations lay the basic facts upon which number combinations are built. Drawing, painting, and modeling make writing in the first grade easier. The child's vocabulary is definitized and enlarged through opportunity to talk about home, school, and community experiences. If he lives in a home in which English is not spoken he is taught to express himself in that language. Reading is introduced gradually and happily. The library table filled with well illustrated books challenges his interests. Stories from these books are told to him and he finds the story through the pictures. He dictates stories of his own, illustrates them, and binds all together. A sense of the meaning of books is built up and a desire to get all that books offer developed.

Inadequate provision for children who belong in the field of special education.—As pointed out the mentality of a number of children is so low or their physical condition so far from normal that they will never be able to do the work of the average curriculum successfully. Yet with comparatively few exceptions no special provision is made for the education of such children. If they come to school at all they enter first grades intended for average groups. Many repeaters in the first grade are dull normal and subnormal children, or other types of children belonging in the field of special education. This field includes speech defectives; the blind and seriously deaf; undernourished and tuberculous children; crippled children who are unable to come to school without transportation or the nature of whose handicaps makes a special program necessary; restoration cases; physically and mentally handicapped children in general.*

*For advice concerning the education of such children address Director of Special Education, Department of Public Instruction, Harrisburg.



MUTUAL COOPERATION IN CARING FOR PETS

EMPHASIS UPON CHARACTER EDUCATION

The alphabet of life.—Gesell says that although the child of kindergarten age may not learn to read he is never-the-less acquiring healthful and unhealthful habits of activity; that he is “mastering the alphabet of life.” Not so long ago even great leaders in great nations were illiterate. Their strength lay in their personal characteristics; in their ideals; in their powers of initiative and attainment. Desirable character attributes are no less important in today’s world. The formation of character, good or bad, begins with life itself. The infant who is rocked and fed when he cries learns early to demand attention and insist upon unreasonable feeding. The child of four or five years of age may be incapable of learning to read, but he is capable of learning to care for his pets and to avoid crossing the street when he sees an automobile approaching. In short, he is capable of carrying on a part of his education that is more important than abstract academic knowledge.

The child in the kindergarten finds work and play with thirty children of his own age far different from being a member of a family group. He learns the give and take of life; habits of cooperation and self control are set up; the beginnings of a recognition of moral and civic values are developed. The kindergarten child’s relation to his teacher is also an important factor in his education. At the age of four or five every child needs to come into contact with more personalities than those furnished by his home circle. The kindergarten teacher is wise and loving like a good mother, but she is more impersonal in her attitude. Satisfying a child’s need for companionship, directing his untrained will, and at the same time respecting his developing personality, means the establishment of right habits and attitudes in the most formative period of his development.

The final aim of the school.—In its finality the value of American education expresses itself in character growth; in the promotion of the qualities of the ideal American personality. The pupil who attends kindergarten becomes at an earlier age than he would otherwise, a part of an organized situation in which his experiences are definitely directed toward the development of moral and civic outcomes. This takes on special significance in the case of the child who leaves school at an early age. At the present time fifty percent of all pupils who enroll in the public schools of Pennsylvania leave at the completion of the eighth grade or earlier. Comparatively few of these pupils have had an opportunity to attend kindergarten. What an additional year of controlled and directed experience may mean to such children cannot be estimated. Thus the kindergarten is justified on a basis of character education alone.



EARLY LESSONS IN CIVIC SERVICE

PART II

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINDERGARTEN

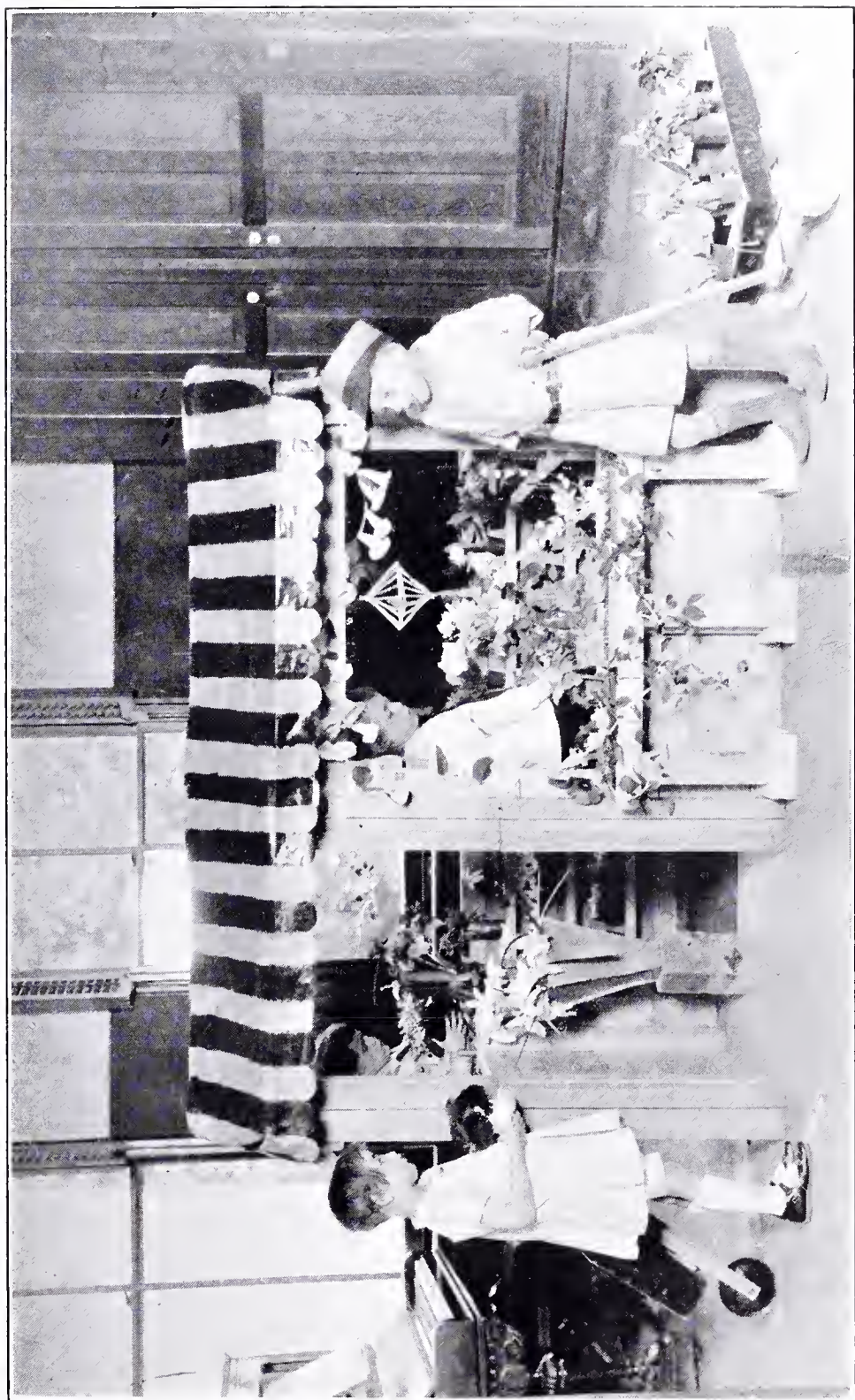
IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

Favorable conditions.—Few states have more favorable foundations upon which to build kindergarten education than Pennsylvania. The professional preparation of the kindergarten teacher is governed by the same rules that govern the preparation of teachers in the elementary school in general. A kindergarten teacher in our public schools must have at least two years of professional training leading to a certificate to teach in this field. In addition, one state teachers college and certain other approved institutions offer four year courses in kindergarten education leading to a bachelor's degree. State reimbursement for the same purposes and on the same terms operate in the kindergarten as elsewhere in the elementary schools. Full authority is given to school boards to establish kindergartens in response to a petition under the law: "The board of school directors of each school district of the first, second, third, and fourth class may, upon the petition of the parents or guardians of at least twenty-five children between the ages of four and six years, residing within the district and within one mile of any elementary school building situate in such district, establish and maintain a kindergarten."

The present situation.—In spite of favorable opportunities for the establishment and maintenance of the kindergarten, the situation in Pennsylvania is extremely backward. With the exception of Vermont, one of the four financially poorest states in the nation, Pennsylvania ranks lowest in the ratio of children of kindergarten age attending kindergartens of any state east of the Mississippi and north of the Mason and Dixon Line.* In 1928-1929 there were only about 581 kindergarten teachers in the public schools of the State. Of these 367 were in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Of the 18 second class districts in the State only 8 reported public school kindergartens with 122 kindergarten teachers. Of 215 third class districts but 17 reported kindergartens with 49 kindergarten teachers. In the more than 2300 fourth class districts but 43 kindergarten teachers were reported. Here, however, many districts are too scattered to sustain adequate attendance for a kindergarten.

The answer to the question.—A law, that permits school boards to establish kindergartens at their discretion upon petition, is usually

*United States Bureau of Education Bul. 1925, No. 7, Kindergarten Legislation, Nina C. Vandewalker, pages 5, 6, 20. Supt. of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.



INDUSTRY AND BEAUTY COMBINED

known as "permissive on petition." A law that obliges school boards to establish kindergartens when properly petitioned is usually referred to as "mandatory upon petition." The law in Pennsylvania is of the first type.

Many people believe that a mandatory law is the answer to the present kindergarten situation in Pennsylvania. A study of the situation indicates that the present type of kindergarten legislation in Pennsylvania is not necessarily a retarding factor. California, which ranks first in the ratio of children of kindergarten age in kindergartens, has mandatory legislation. The three succeeding states, New Jersey, New York, Michigan, have permissive legislation. Of the twenty-one states outranking Pennsylvania in 1925 in the ratio of children of kindergarten age in kindergartens, the legal school age in three was so low that kindergartens automatically operated. Of the eighteen remaining states six had mandatory legislation and twelve had permissive legislation.

The whole matter seems to be an expression of public demand. A considerable number of people feel that the kindergarten is a happy opportunity for young children but not an especially valuable part of their schooling. Others approve of kindergarten education as a theory but are not active in urging its establishment as a tax supported project. Still others are passive supporters only. The kindergarten will flourish when the public in general is convinced that it is a necessary part of the education of the child and that it is worth paying for even if it hurts. Every friend of kindergarten education should seek to bring this about.

Responsibility of the school board.—As pointed out, school boards in Pennsylvania may establish a kindergarten in response to a petition signed by the parents or guardians of twenty-five children as provided under the law. Thus the ultimate responsibility for the establishment of a kindergarten in a community rests upon the school board. In general school boards appreciate the worth of the kindergarten. They are unwilling, however, to establish a kindergarten unless they are convinced that the public as a whole wishes kindergarten education and is willing to be taxed for its support.

It is at this point that many petitions to school boards for the establishment of a kindergarten are weak. The school board that does not establish a kindergarten, in spite of evident need, is usually convinced that the public is opposed to the financial outlay involved. In such a case, a casual petition signed by the parents or guardians of twenty-five children is not enough. The school board must be convinced that the public is in sympathy with the desires of these parents or guardians for the establishment of a kindergarten and is willing to be taxed for



A MODERN KINDERGARTEN

its support. It is advisable, therefore, to accompany such a petition with a list of signatures of prominent citizens in the community, setting forth their belief that the kindergarten should be established and provision made for its support out of public school funds. If this cannot be obtained it is obvious that the community is not ready to support kindergarten education. In such a case, petition usually should be deferred and a campaign of instruction carried on. As pointed out, the kindergarten will flourish when the public, in general, is convinced that it is a necessary part of the education of the child, and that it is worth paying for even if it hurts.

HOUSING AND FURNITURE

Housing.—Some kindergartens are planned for a large group of children, with two or more teachers. Others are planned for a small group with one teacher. Plans for a kindergarten may be included in a new school building or a special kindergarten building may be erected. Again it may be necessary to adapt to kindergarten use rooms originally built for another purpose. In still other cases school boards may be obliged to house a kindergarten outside of the school plant. The housing of each kindergarten is a special problem to be worked out in the light of the situation. Plans and advice may be secured of the School Buildings Bureau in the State Department of Public Instruction.

Furniture.—The furniture of the modern kindergarten differs but little from that of the well equipped first grade. Standard classroom equipment must be provided, such as a clock, thermometer, a teacher's desk and chair, and chairs for guests. A sand table is almost a necessity. A carpenter will build this for a few dollars. A convenient size for the tray to hold the sand is 3 feet by 5 feet and 4 inches deep. This tray should be lined with zinc and fastened upon four strong legs equipped with castors. The whole structure should not be more than 24 inches from the floor to the top of the tray.

A table 20 inches high and large enough to accommodate a group of six or eight children is needed for books. A round table adds variety to the furniture of the room, but any type of table may be used. A suitable chair should be provided for each child. If funds permit, six additional chairs should be provided for special purposes. Moving about of chairs will thus be considerably reduced. Chairs should meet hygienic requirements and should be in two sizes, half of them 10 inches high and half of them 12 inches high. Tables also should be in two heights, half of the number 18 inches high and half of the number 20 inches high. The top should accommodate two children comfortably. An oblong top 20 by 30 inches or a square top 30 by 30

inches are minimum sizes. Tables may be purchased of dealers in school furniture or built by a carpenter. Kitchen tables with the legs cut off to the proper height answer very well. Such tables may be painted in a pleasing color to harmonize with the chairs. Where manual training departments are in operation a considerable part of the equipment of the kindergarten may be made in the school shops. Rubber tips should be provided for chair legs. A piano is necessary for the highest type of kindergarten work. A good second-hand piano sometimes may be found at a bargain.

SUPPLIES

Cost of kindergarten materials.—The cost of materials for the modern kindergarten is low. A very adequate minimum list of permanent material for a kindergarten with two sessions, twenty-five children in each session, may be obtained for less than one hundred dollars. The list that follows is suggestive only. Modifications may be easily made to meet different situations and the needs of different teachers. The cost of blocks and boards listed will differ slightly in different communities and with the quality of the wood used. They should always be smooth and of wood that does not splinter easily.

PERMANENT SUPPLIES

35 blocks	3 x 3 x 12"
65 blocks	3 x 6 x 6"
100 blocks	3 x 6 x 12"
350 blocks	1½ x 3 x 6"
15 blocks	1 x 3 x 18"
35 boards	1 x 3 x 24"
15 boards	1 x 3 x 30"
10 boards	1 x 10 x 72"

Made by a carpenter, approximate cost, \$58.00

2 M second gift beads, assorted	\$2.50	
2 dozen blunt scissors	7.00	
1 crock with lid, 3 gal.75	
6 rubber balls, 5-inch	1.50	
	—————	\$11.75
Picture books for library table	10.00	
Dolls, toys, and other special material	10.00	
	—————	\$20.00

Total \$89.75

Running expenses.—As pointed out the kindergarten when established becomes a part of the school system and as such shares in any State-aid to which the elementary grades are entitled. Thus the salary of the kindergarten teacher adds comparatively little to the cost of the average school system. The cost of upkeep too is small. About seventy cents per pupil each year will provide necessary transient material.

In addition to permanent materials the kindergarten child needs paper, paints and other general supplies common to the elementary school as a whole. The following amounts are suggested for the first year for the type of kindergarten listed above. As in the case of kindergarten equipment this list should be revised so as to meet the needs of the particular kindergarten being considered. So, too, different teachers may wish to make some adjustments.*

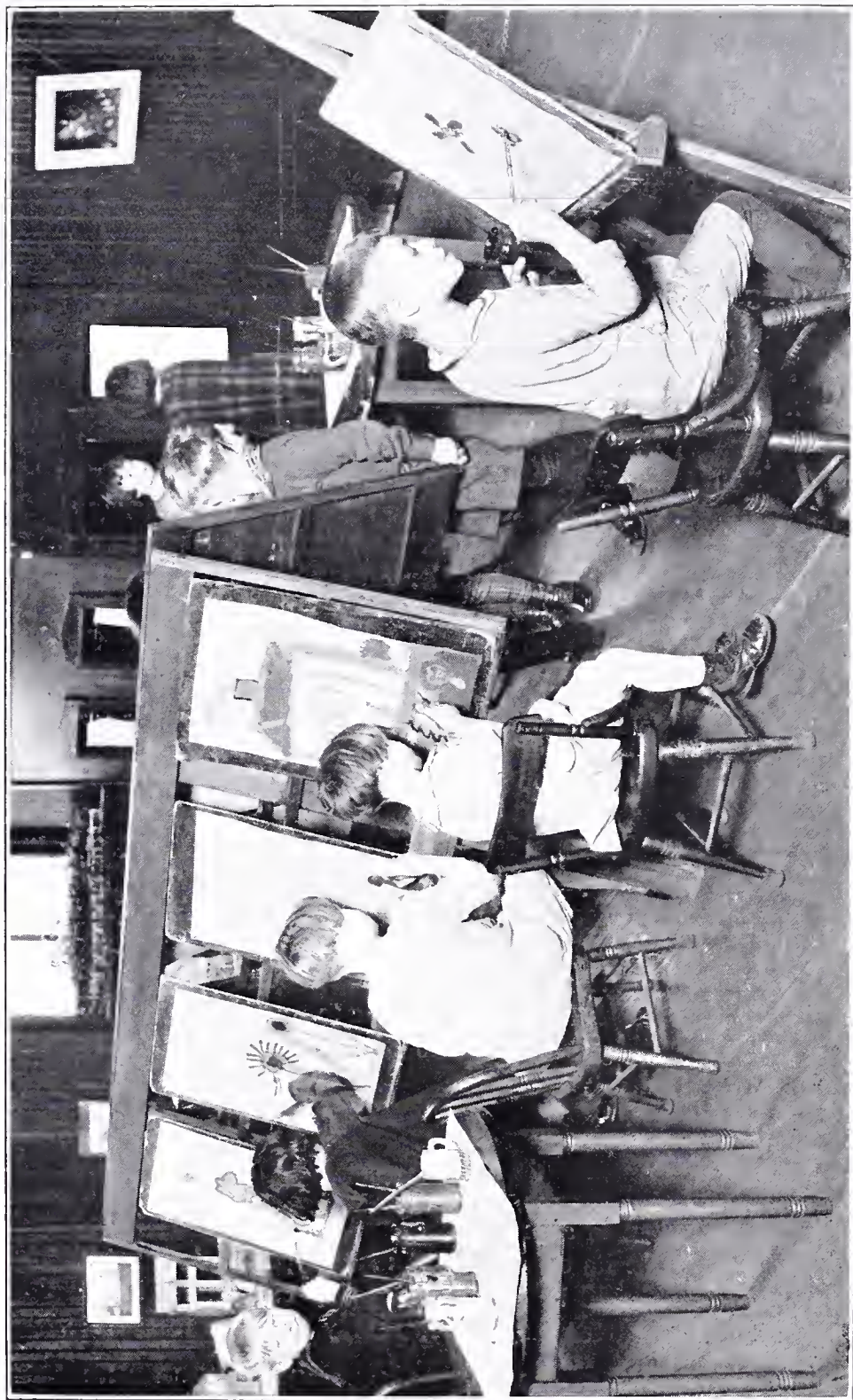
TRANSIENT SUPPLIES

The prices given are those in operation for the quality chosen when the list was organized:

1 dozen shoe strings	\$.60
2 dozen boxes crayola, 8 colors	4.80
1 ream rag paper (or 1 roll wrapping paper 18 inches wide)	3.00
3 packages manilla paper, 10 cents per pkg.30
3 quarts paste	1.80
1 package each tonal paper; red, orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, black, 10 cents per pkg.70
100 pounds clay	3.00
2 yards oilcloth50
1 pound paint, dry color, wall paint: red, yellow, green, blue, 35 cents each	1.40
2 bottles show card color, black20
2 bottles show card color, white20
1 dozen paint brushes, 1½ inch80
Total	\$17.30

Provision for growth.—No school system will wish to continue a kindergarten on a minimum basis. Additions will be made as funds are available. Usually articles should be added upon the recommendation of the teacher. The following are among desirable additions to the minimum list.

*United States Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C., Bulletin 1921, No. 13, The Housing and Equipment of Kindergartens, ten cents, includes information respecting kindergarten furniture, equipment, supplies, and books for teachers.



SOME OF THE FATHERS MAY ENJOY MAKING EASELS FOR KINDERGARTEN USE

Wall pictures
Painting easels
Folding play house at least four feet high
Patty Smith Hill blocks
Jungle gym junior
See-saw
Slide 3 feet by 6 feet
Walking board
Aquarium
Music cabinet if needed
Phonograph

Ordering materials.—In purchasing materials for the kindergarten, as elsewhere, the best and most suitable material for the money should be provided. Supplies common to the elementary school, as a whole, may be included in the general order for such material. Some of the kindergarten equipment listed may be built or purchased locally. In the case of kindergarten material obtained from outside the community, it is suggested that catalogs be obtained from firms dealing in the material desired, and that each article be chosen on a basis of its fitness, durability and price.*

Gifts for the kindergarten.—Under the law school boards may accept gifts for school purposes. In some cases where school funds are low, parent-teacher associations or other organizations are anxious to contribute to the establishment of a kindergarten. This is an admirable attitude. School Boards sometimes feel that they can meet the running expenses of a kindergarten but are unable to provide initial equipment and supplies. The gift of a piano or other necessary articles may eliminate this difficulty.**

SUMMARY

The kindergarten is a practical educational need. It is relatively inexpensive both in its establishment and support. Adequate kindergarten facilities should be the goal of every community in the State in which a kindergarten may be reasonably expected to operate.

*A bulletin, *Equipment and Supplies*, International Kindergarten Union, Washington, D. C., price 35 cents, gives detailed information as to where various kindergarten supplies may be obtained with prices.

**Section 126, Pennsylvania School Law, 1929.